

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 IO-13 ACDA-07 /080 W
-----125779 291403Z /53

P 291340Z JUN 77

FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4525
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY
ALL NATO CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L NATO 06200

BELGRADE FOR CSCE DEL

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, PFOR, CSCE
SUBJECT: SOVIET TACTICS AT BELGRADE

REF: BELGRADE 4282

1. AT JUNE 28 POLADS MEETING, NORWEGIAN REP REPORTED THAT DURING A JUNE 22 LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH THE HEAD OF THE NORWEGIAN DELEGATION AT BELGRADE, SOVIET DELEGATION HEAD VORONTSOV TOOK A HARD LINE ON THE US APPROACH. VORONTSOV CHARACTERIZED THE US/UK DRAFT AGENDA AS PART OF A NATO PLAN, INSPIRED BY THE US, TO "CORNER" THE USSR ON HUMAN RIGHTS. CLAIMING SOVIET PREFERENCE FOR A "FREE AND DEMOCRATIC" EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, VORONTSOV SAID THAT IN ORDER TO AVOID TOO STRONG A FOCUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, THE USSR WOULD RESERVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK ON OTHER TOPICS DURING THE PHASE THE WESTERN SIDE SAW AS A "RATING EXERCISE" ON SOVEREIGN STATES. VORONTSOV ADDED THAT RATHER THAN ACCEPT THE APPROACH ONE NATO COUNTRY WAS TRYING TO FORCE ON THE USSR, THE SOVIETS WERE PREPARED TO LET THE PREPARATORY MEETING DISCONTINUE AND NOT TO HAVE THE MAIN MEETING AT ALL.

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VORONTSOV EVIDENCED SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT US EFFORTS TO MAKE THE MAIN MEETING A TRIBUNAL FOR ACCUSING THE SOVIETS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. THE NORWEGIANS CSCE DELEGATION VIEWED VORONTSOV'S POSTURE AS PRIMARILY TACTICAL.

2. UK REP CHARACTERIZED VORONTSOV'S LINE AS "RIDICULOUS TRIPE", WHICH HE HOPED ALLIES WOULD KNOCK DOWN EFFECTIVELY.

US REP URGED ALLIES TO EXCHANGE SUCH REPORTS AT BELGRADE WHERE ALLIES COULD MOST EFFECTIVELY COORDINATE TACTICS AND RESPONSES TO SOVIET LINE.

3. COMMENT: HARSH SOVIET LINE WITH ALLIED DELEGATIONS AT BELGRADE HAS ALREADY BEEN SUMMED UP IN PARA 3 REFTEL. WHILE WE BELIEVE ALLIED EXCHANGES ON SOVIET TACTICS AT CSCE MEETINGS SHOULD BE CENTERED AT BELGRADE, WE THINK IT COULD BE HELPFUL IN ALLAYING ALLIED CONCERNS ABOUT SOVIET REACTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IF THE ALLIES ARE MADE AWARE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN TAKING A MUCH QUIETER TONE WITH US, EMPHASIZING THEIR DESIRE TO FIND REASONABLE COMPROMISES (PARA 3 REFTEL). END COMMENT.

4. NORWEGIAN POLAD TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT VORONTSOV CHARACTERIZED US-SOVIET RELATIONS AS MURKY. HE SAID SOVIETS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT US ADMINISTRATION, THOUGHT THE US MIGHT REEVALUATE ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE USSR, AND BELIEVED MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON HOW THE US PLAYS ITS CRUISE MISSILE CARD. NOTING A DISTURBING US MILITARY BUILDUP, VORONTSOV SAID THE PRESIDENT'S SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WAS AIMED AT GAINING POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE US, AND EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT BRZEZINSKI'S COLD WAR ROOTS. BENNETT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PFOR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NATO06200
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: n/a
Format: TEL
From: NATO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977065/aaaaadzt.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Message ID: 5fcb7c7b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BELGRADE 4282
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2125867
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET TACTICS AT BELGRADE
TAGS: NATO, CSCE
To: SECSTATE WASHDC BELGRADE MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5fcb7c7b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009